

RESOLUTION

NO. R-19-79

CITY HALL: February 21, 2019

BY: COUNCILMEMBER GISLESON PALMER

SECONDED BY:

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF NEW ORLEANS CALLING FOR
A PUBLIC PARK AT 1141 ESPLANADE AVENUE**

WHEREAS, The Historic Faubourg Tremé neighborhood is the birthplace and home to most of New Orleans's indigenous music, food, and cultural traditions; and

WHEREAS, The survival of the communities that create and innovate those traditions is necessary to the survival of our city's heritage and legacy, as well as its interdependent tourism industry; and

WHEREAS, Communities and neighborhoods need development that prioritizes affordable housing; livable communities, including the presence of nearby parks and greenspace and adequate public transportation; and avoiding the displacement of residents; and

WHEREAS, In 2011 the Historic Faubourg Tremé neighborhood proposed space for a public park, including play space and greenspace, in Tremé at a lot owned by the City of New Orleans that has remained vacant for 40 years; and

WHEREAS, The City continues to own this property, located on Square 380, Lot A-1, in the Third Municipal District, bounded by Esplanade Avenue, Henriette Delille Street (formerly Saint Claude Avenue), Kerlerec Street, and North Rampart Street (Municipal Addresses include 1141 Esplanade Avenue); and

WHEREAS, The proposed park is centrally located in or around three historic neighborhoods, being the French Quarter, Faubourg Tremé, and Faubourg Marigny; and

WHEREAS, The nearest public parks with playground equipment to this location are Washington Square (one-half mile) and Lemann Playground (one mile); and

WHEREAS, Only one public park with playground equipment, Cabrini Playground, exists in the French Quarter and getting there requires many families to cross the busy North Rampart thoroughfare; and

WHEREAS, A public park with playground equipment provides needed greenspace and playspace for nearby residents, and it also provides a draw for tourists to explore areas outside of the French Quarter; and

WHEREAS, The official citywide master plan, *The Plan for the 21st Century: New Orleans 2030*, recommends that every New Orleans resident has a park within a walking distance of approximately one-third of a mile; and

WHEREAS, Members of the neighborhood have pursued developing this park for many years, including establishing the My NOLA Park nonprofit and raising funds to finance the development of the playground and an endowment for its maintenance; and

WHEREAS, The neighborhood conducted a coordinated community survey of over 500 nearby residents, and 99 percent of respondents desired a park with shaded and innovative seating, gathering areas, playground equipment, adult swings, and walkways for youth biking or skating; and

WHEREAS, Two architectural firms, Perez and Futureproof, used the survey data to create professional renderings with a vision for the park, incorporating storm water management features, native landscaping, and a community garden; and

WHEREAS, Numerous local organizations have partnered with the neighborhood to work toward the park's creation, including but not limited to GoFloodMe, St. Anna's Episcopal Church, Recirculating Farms Coalition, Historic Faubourg Tremé Association, People United for Armstrong Park, and the Greater Tremé Consortium; and

WHEREAS, Up until the 1999 Land Use Map, land use for the site was designated Parkland, Recreation, Open Space, and Residential Single or Two Family, and as a Historic Core neighborhood under the Master Plan, any land use should reflect historic development patterns; and

WHEREAS, The site of the public park was rezoned in 2012 by the City Council (Ord. Cal. No. 28,929) from a B1-A Neighborhood Business District to a P Park and Recreation District, specifically in furtherance of developing the public park envisioned by the neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, The property's current zoning, updated to HMC-2 Historic Marigny/Tremé/Bywater Commercial district as a part of the 2015 Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance overhaul, continues to allow parks and playgrounds as a permitted use; and

WHEREAS, Parks have been shown to positively contribute to the health of individuals and communities; the environment, including storm water management and air quality; property values; and the social fabric and safety of neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, On January 19, 2019, the City of New Orleans Office of Housing Policy and Community Development (OCD) released a Request For Proposals for "Development of the Vacant Lot Located at 1141 Esplanade Ave.", to make the property available to a qualified developer through a 99 year lease; **NOW, THEREFORE**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, The New Orleans City Council calls on the OCD to ensure that any development at 1141 Esplanade Avenue is responsive to our City's long-term housing affordability crisis in a way that benefits existing neighbors by meeting their economic, cultural, health, and educational needs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That in order to be eligible for City funding, proposals for 1141 Esplanade Avenue must include one hundred percent affordable housing units, without any market rate housing units, as well as substantial greenspace for the community's use as a public park and playground.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the neighboring community will be involved with the applicant selection process.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City Council requests that the City of New Orleans establish an Equity Policy, which requires all development projects in low-income neighborhoods to meet certain equity criteria – such as improving the community's access to public greenspace and public transit – in order to receive any City funding or subsidy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City Council strongly supports other efforts to further address the need for affordable housing in New Orleans, including through strategically reserving certain City adjudicated properties for affordable development and through reclaiming undeveloped and vacant parcels dedicated to nonprofit entities who have not fulfilled commitments to develop affordable housing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City Council offers its legislative powers to assist in any way possible.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk of Council is hereby requested to forward a certified copy of this resolution to the Office of Mayor LaToya Cantrell, Office of Community Development, Office of Youth and Families, New Orleans Recreation Development Commission, and the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority.

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION WAS READ IN FULL, THE ROLL WAS CALLED ON THE ADOPTION THEREOF, AND RESULTED AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

AND THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.